## Module Specification

### ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This module specification applies for the academic year 2019-20  
Last revised 19 September 2019

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel St., London WC1E 7HT.  [www.lshtm.ac.uk](http://www.lshtm.ac.uk)

### GENERAL INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module name</th>
<th>Health Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module code</td>
<td>1808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Organiser</td>
<td>Dr Dina Balabanova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Dina.Balabanova@lshtm.ac.uk">Dina.Balabanova@lshtm.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Faculty</td>
<td>Public Health &amp; Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>15 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Not currently accredited by any other body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>Health systems, Governance, Organisation, Financing, Health infrastructure, Human Resources, Health reform, Goals / MDGs, Public-private, Health Policy, Non-communicable diseases, Globalisation, Research, International / global</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND AUDIENCE

#### Overall aim
To demonstrate understanding of the functioning of health systems, drawing on relevant disciplinary perspectives and enable students to undertake analysis of health systems in developed and developing countries. This will involve understanding the core building blocks of health care systems and modes of operation, the implications of different approaches to system design for access, quality, and broader outcomes, and highlighting the equity impacts of different design features.

#### Intended learning outcomes
By the end of this module, students should be able to:

- Define the concept of a ‘health system’, and its core objectives, elements and functions. Understand the debates around boundaries of a health system, and major theories and research approaches related to the understanding of health systems
- Drawing on a range of key approaches and models, to analyse health systems and the role of historical and political factors influencing these
Assess the role of different health care system configurations to promoting good health, access to services, equity, and economic and wider social outcomes

Critically appraise and apply key concepts and approaches to health systems evaluation and performance measurement, the role of policy actors, and global influences on health systems

Be able to apply a health systems approach to major health challenges in a range of different contexts

The intention of the module is to prepare students for work in national health systems, for example in strategic planning, policy design and implementation, at national, regional, and district level, in international organisations, NGOs, and academic institutions, among others. The module covers (in a compressed form) key health systems frameworks and issues that are on national and international agendas and seeks to equip students with the language, key concepts, and ability to engage in high level debates. The ability to write a concise, policy-focussed editorial, which is part of the module assessment, is a transferable skill that is core to many of these roles.

Target audience
It is expected that the module will be of interest to students on the MScs in Public Health, Health Policy Planning and Financing and Public Health for Development.

CONTENT

Session content
The module is expected to include sessions addressing the following topics:

- What is a health system? What are the health systems for?
- What makes up a health system? Governance.
- Health system functions: Financing.
- Health system functions: Creating resources.
- Health system functions: Provision.
- People-centred health systems
- Universal coverage as a key health system goal.
- Pluralistic health systems: The role of the private/voluntary sector and challenges for access and regulation.
- Assessing health systems and their performance.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Study resources provided or required
Module Information can be found on the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) containing information about each session and key references for the module. All readings are available through the library or the internet.

Teaching and learning methods
The module includes a combination of lectures, seminars, assessed group activities, online discussions and self-guided learning. Students will be divided into seminar groups covering high- or low-income settings (and possibly middle-income) according to their preferences. The seminars will be to a large extent student-led and will focus on practical case studies chosen to illustrate key policy issues, and will be supplemented by private study. Students running seminars will be expected to initiate and facilitate at least one discussion on Moodle related to their seminar topic, as a part of their preparation.
### Assessment details

The overall mark will consist of 75% for the editorials, and 25% for group work.

A. Individual assessed written ‘editorial’ of up to 1500 words, excluding references, figures and tables. It will be written in the style of BMJ or the Lancet and examples will be provided. The topic can be selected from a list of questions provided by the module organiser or seminar leaders, or chosen by the students. The questions will draw on the concepts covered in the lectures and essential readings.

B. The group work mark will consist of: 75% aggregate mark through peer assessment (using a blind vote), and 25% given by the seminar leaders. Students will be provided with clear criteria for assessment to guide them in preparing their presentations.

C. Each student will be expected to post a minimum of 3 posts as a part of an online activity (new or in response to others, each of at least 50 words). The posts are not assessed but expected for completion of the module.

Resit/deferred/new attempts – The task for the editorials will be to revise and resubmit an editorial on a new topic.

### Assessment dates

Assessments will be due on **14 February 2020**.

Resit/deferred/new attempts - The next assessment deadline will be during mid/late September of the current academic year.

### Language of study and assessment

English (please see ‘English language requirements’ below regarding the standard required for entry).

### TIMING AND MODE OF STUDY

**Duration**

5 weeks at 2.5 days per week

Lecture and seminars are on Thursday and Friday morning, with the rest of the time expected to be dedicated to self-directed learning, online activities and seminar preparation.

**Dates**

Wednesday lunchtime to Friday afternoon

**Timetable slot**

Term 2 - slot C2

**Mode of Study**

The module is taught face-to-face in London. Both full-time and part-time students follow the same schedule.

**Learning time**

The notional learning time for the module totals 150 hours, consisting of:

- Contact time ≈ 32 hours
- Directed self-study ≈ 35 hours
- Self-directed learning ≈ 33 hours
- Assessment, review and revision ≈ 50 hours

### APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

**Pre-requisites**

None

**English language requirements**

A strong command of the English language is necessary to benefit from studying the module. Applicants whose first language is not English or
whose prior university studies have not been conducted wholly in English must fulfil LSHTM’s [English language requirements](#).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student numbers</th>
<th>40-60 (numbers may be capped due to limitations in facilities or staffing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student selection</td>
<td>Preference will be given to LSHTM MSc students and LSHTM research degree students. Other applicants meeting the entry criteria will usually be offered a place in the order applications are received, until any cap on numbers is reached. Applicants may be placed on a waiting list and given priority the next time the module is run. Full Registration (full participation) by LSHTM research degree students is required for this module.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>